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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Raymond T. Bowman
Bureau of the Budget
Executive Office of the President
Washington 25, D. C.

SUBJECT : Access to Customs Manifests on Exports

1. In reference to your letter of October 11th to members of the Interagency Committee on Statistical Security, the Central Intelligence Agency does not have a direct interest in the release of information on export manifests, since any of its own direct shipments would not be disclosed. Nevertheless, the Agency does have an interest in certain other export shipments in support of programs of indirect concern to this Agency whose security might be compromised by making public the details of customs manifests. We therefore advise against Mr. Kendall's proposal of October 5.

2. The Interagency Committee has not met on this subject since last year. We should therefore like to mention certain additional arguments against this proposal which we recall were advanced in the meeting of 3 February 1955.

(a) It was brought out that although Department of Defense shipments would be adequately protected under the proposed procedures, a substantial portion (perhaps one-fourth to one-half in certain cases) of military aid shipments may be handled by transferring funds to foreign governments and then letting such governments purchase and arrange shipment of the goods involved, for themselves. Such goods would therefore appear on commercial manifests, which would not only be informative to Soviet intelligence, but might be a source of friction among our allies -- as they compared notes on what we were shipping as aid to different countries.

(b) It has been proposed that only "accredited representatives" would have access to the manifests and that such "accredited individuals" would be instructed not to make written notes relating to strategic cargo items. In last year's meeting, however, it was stated that checks of publications based on access to import manifests under similar procedures had disclosed that in a majority of cases information on strategic materials had been extracted and published along with everything else.

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(c) Mention was made of the value of the analysis of individual cargo manifests (when they can be obtained) [redacted] in studying the trade, shipping patterns, and economic dependencies of the Sino-Soviet Bloc countries. The "propriety" of disclosing the detailed manifests of individual shippers to trade journals and hence to potential competitors -- [redacted] was questioned. It was brought out that the groups who had requested release of this information were primarily commercial publishers of shipping statistics or export exchanges whose interest in publishing this information was largely as a "come-on" in soliciting prospective subscribers. 25X1C 25X1C

3. In my judgment, as a participant in the February 3rd meeting, these arguments appear to have continuing validity.

(signed)

[redacted] 25X1A
CIA Representative on
Interagency Committee on Statistical Security

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